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# BEETHOVEN

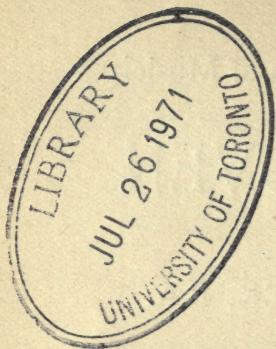
BY

J. S. SHEDLOCK, B.A.



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# LIFE OF BEETHOVEN

## THE MAN

"This appears to be the special task of biography: to present the man in relation to his times, and to show how far they are opposed to him, in how far they are favourable to him, and how, if he be an artist, poet, or writer, he reflects them outwardly."—GOETHE.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN was born at Bonn, most probably on December 16, 1770. His grandfather, Ludwig, entered the service of the Elector of Cologne at Bonn in 1733, first as bass singer and afterwards as capellmeister, and his father as tenor singer in 1756. The former, an able artist, was held in high respect; the latter succumbed to the demon drink, lost his voice, and finally his position, so that before young Ludwig had completed his nineteenth year he had to look after his two younger brothers, Caspar and Nicolas—the one four, the other six years younger than himself. Ludwig at an early age displayed a love for music, and the father soon set him to hard practice, both on the violin and the spinet, possibly thinking that his son, like Mozart, might become a prodigy, and thus help to retrieve the broken fortune of the

family. In a memorandum of the Court music in 1784 the father's voice is described as worn out, and he himself as "very poor." Ludwig, when about ten years of age, received musical instruction from the Court organist, Van den Eeden, an old friend of the boy's grandfather who died in 1773, and afterwards from Neefe, who succeeded Eeden. Neefe took great interest in his pupil, who, before he was twelve years old, was appointed deputy-organist. Already at that time, as stated in a notice contributed by Neefe to *Cramer's Magazin*, the boy could play most of Bach's immortal "forty-eight" fugues, "a feat," as his master with just pride remarked, "which will be understood by the initiated." And he must also have become familiar with the clavier sonatas of Emanuel Philipp Bach, whom Neefe so much admired, and to whom he even dedicated a set of twelve sonatas. Thus Beethoven made early acquaintance with Bach's works, which summed up the past and pointed to the future, and with the music of the son, Emanuel, who, under Italian influence, was opening up "new paths." One interesting manuscript has been preserved—an incomplete copy of a cantata by Emanuel, on which Beethoven wrote, "Copied by my dear father." The attention of the latter had most probably been drawn to the work by Neefe.

The boy lived in a thoroughly artistic atmosphere. The Elector, Maximilian Friedrich (1761-1784), was an enthusiast for music. He attracted the celebrated actor Grossmann, with



BEETHOVEN'S BIRTH-HOUSE AT BONN.





his operatic company, to Bonn, and our future composer heard most of the standard operas, including those of Mozart; there were also frequent concerts at the Court. Ludwig became not only organist, but cembalist and also viola player in the band. His budding talent—according to the traveller Henry Swinburne, who visited Bonn in 1780—had “not escaped the notice of the Elector.” Ludwig’s home life was certainly not a happy one, but many kind friends looked after him, especially the cultivated Breuning family and the influential Count Waldstein.

The Elector Maximilian Friedrich died in 1784, and was succeeded by Maximilian Franz, brother to Joseph II., Emperor of Austria. An event of special interest was Beethoven’s visit to Vienna in 1787. When in 1791 he finally left Bonn and went to that centre of musical life, his patron and friend, Count Waldstein, wrote a few lines in his album exhorting the young composer “to labour assiduously and to receive Mozart’s spirit from the hands of Haydn.” Possibly, then, it was the Count who suggested the earlier visit to Vienna. If so, the idea must have commended itself to the Elector, who in 1785 was himself in Vienna, and is supposed to have tried to tempt Mozart to leave the Austrian capital and settle in Bonn. Nothing is known for certain concerning Ludwig’s very short stay in Vienna, except the one fact that he played to Mozart. To seek the advice of that master was apparently

the main object of the visit. The illness of the mother, however, put an end to whatever plan had been formed. Ludwig hastened back home, and seven weeks afterwards she died. He felt the loss deeply. "She was such a good, loving mother to me—my best friend. Oh, who could have been happier than I, when as yet I was able to utter the sweet name 'mother,' and to know that it was heard! To whom can I now say it?" Thus he wrote to a friend, Dr. Schade.

In 1790 Haydn passed through Bonn on his way to London, but it is not known whether Ludwig was introduced to him. Anyhow, two years later Haydn was there again, on his return journey, and the young man showed him a cantata of his own, which the master praised. Mozart died on December 5, 1791, so that Haydn was then the greatest living composer. One cannot help thinking that the Elector, or Count Waldstein, or maybe both, introduced the question of the young man becoming his pupil. Anyhow, a few months later Ludwig was in Vienna studying counterpoint with Haydn, whose recent London triumphs had gained for him so great a reputation.

Beethoven's life in Vienna must be briefly told. It was no doubt the intention of the Elector that he should return to Bonn when he had concluded his studies, and occupy a post similar to the one held by his grandfather. But war broke out in 1792, the French army entered Bonn, and the Elector fled, never to



return. Beethoven had not long been in Vienna before he attracted the notice of many noble personages and also musical enthusiasts—Baron van Swieten, the Prince and Princess Lichnowsky, Prince Lobkowitz, and others. Van Swieten was a noted musical amateur and a man of high position. He wrote symphonies—"as stiff as himself," said Haydn—which have long been forgotten; but if by nothing else, he will always be remembered by the little note sent to Beethoven, asking him "to bring his nightcap in his pocket," or to remain after the guests had departed and "play half a dozen Bach fugues by way of evening blessing." The Prince and Princess were very kind to him, and, indeed, in spite of his "brusque" and at times even rude manner, his radicalism, and his eccentricities, he gained many sincere friends. At the house of Count Browne a nobleman was carrying on a conversation with a lady while Beethoven was playing a duet with his pupil Ries. He stopped, saying, and in no gentle voice, "I play no more for such hogs." At a rehearsal of his opera the absence of a bassoon player ruffled the composer's temper. Prince Lobkowitz good-naturedly tried to treat the matter as of small importance. Beethoven, however, could not see it in that light—and to a man who took such infinite pains with every note of his scores the smallest thing was often of the greatest importance—so after the rehearsal he ran to the gate of the Lobkowitz Palace, shouting "Ass of a Lobkowitz!" At

Prince Lichnowsky's country seat in Silesia Beethoven refused to play before the French officers quartered there after the defeat at Jena, and went back suddenly by night to Vienna, where his wrath was only appeased by demolishing a bust of the Prince. But for his genius such behaviour would never have been tolerated.

Haydn and his pupil did not get on well together. The former, advanced in years, had been the humble servant of a prince; the latter, in the very May-morn of manhood, no doubt felt that he was born to command rather than to obey. The lessons ended when Haydn left Vienna to pay his second visit to London, and then Beethoven went to the learned Albrechtsberger and profited by his instruction. The learned but dry old pedant, however, declared that his pupil would "never do anything in decent style," and Haydn's opinion must have been somewhat similar.

In Vienna Beethoven soon became known. His *Septet*, *Prometheus* ballet music, and *Mount of Olives* oratorio, also various chamber-music works brought him fame; moreover, he was accounted one of the best pianists of the day. And he was earning money. Already, in 1801, he wrote to his friend Wegeler: "I have more orders [from publishers] than I can satisfy"; and again: "There is no longer any bargaining with me; I demand, and the money is paid."

Before he had reached his thirtieth year, ominous signs of deafness manifested them-

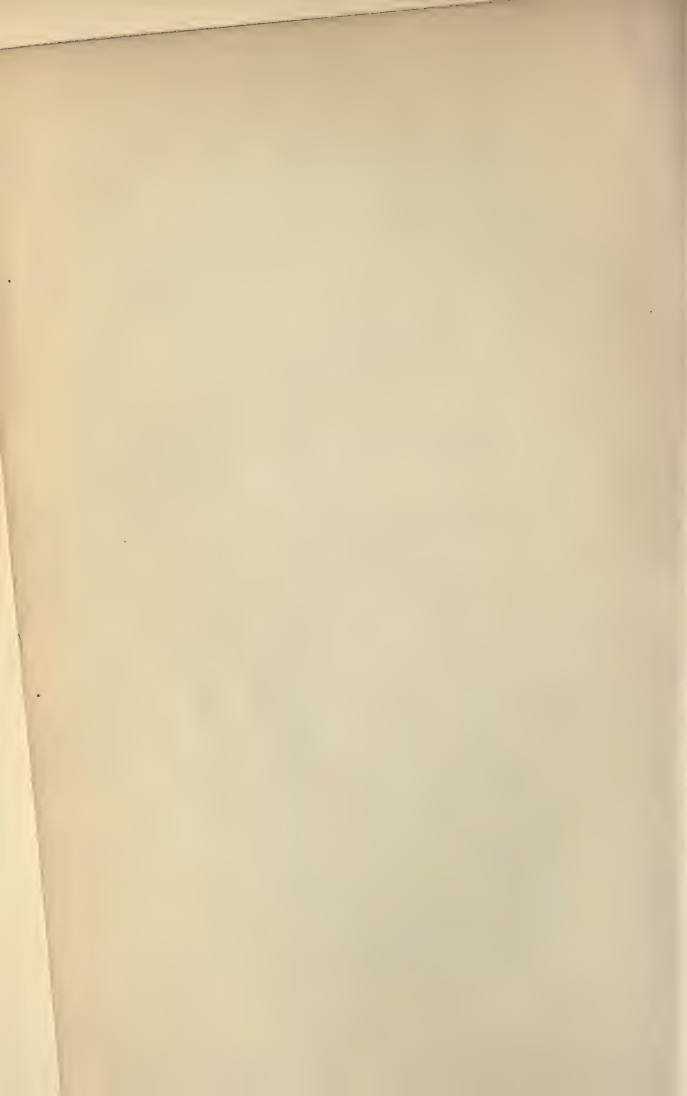


*From a portrait by]*

*[Hornemann, 1802.*

BEETHOVEN AS A YOUNG MAN.





selves. Beethoven consulted many doctors, but in vain: the evil increased, so that during the last five or six years of his life communication with him could only be carried on by writing. It is indeed sad to think that so great a misfortune should befall so great a genius. Already, in 1802, in that most pathetic of documents known as the "Will," which he wrote at Heiligenstadt for his brothers, he says:

"From recreation in the society of my fellow-creatures, from the pleasures of conversation, from the effusions of friendship, I am cut off."

And again:

"Perhaps there may be amendment—perhaps not; I am prepared for the worst."

In addition to this affliction, his health was bad. He never enjoyed the comforts of home, but lived in lodgings—in the city during the winter, and generally in the country during the summer months—which he was constantly changing. In matters of ordinary life he was most impractical; hence constant worries and scenes with servants. No man is a hero to his valet, and they, of course, looked upon him as an irascible and probably half-witted man. There were at times stormy scenes, and Beethoven, as he himself tells us, found throwing a heavy stool or half a dozen books at the offender's head an effectual means of securing quiet—at any rate, for a time. It is pleasant, however, to read of exceptions. His "fast-sailing frigate," Frau Schnapps, and a certain

manservant really seem to have been good and faithful. They got used to his ways, and probably found him, when his temper was not ruffled, a truly kind master.

A commission to write an opera for the theatre *an der Wien* raised Beethoven's hopes. A great success meant fame and even fortune. But the work was produced at an unfortunate time. Bonaparte, at the head of his victorious army, entered Vienna on November 13, 1805, and on the 20th of the same month was given the first performance of *Fidelio*. After the third evening the composer withdrew his work. French officers, who mostly filled the pit, did not form an audience likely to grow enthusiastic over the music; moreover, it was judged too long, even by his friends. The opera was remodelled, and successfully revived the following year; but a violent scene between Baron Braun, proprietor of the theatre, and the composer, ended in the latter once more withdrawing it. Beethoven thought he was not getting his proper share of the receipts. The Baron reasoned with him, and expressed the hope that when the cheaper parts of the house sold as well as pit and stall were then doing his share would be larger. "I don't write for the gods!" shouted Beethoven. "Indeed," replied the Baron, "even Mozart did not disdain them." "The opera shall not be given any more," was the rejoinder; and Beethoven left the theatre, taking with him his score. When excited he was not amenable to reason.



The *Eroica Symphony*, completed in 1804, had been semi-privately performed at Prince Lobkowitz's, but the first public performance of the work took place at a concert given in the theatre in 1805, before the production of the opera. Some admirers of the master, notably Prince Louis Ferdinand, perceived its greatness; the music, however, was beyond the understanding, not only of the public generally, but also of most of the critics. The *C Minor* and *Pastoral Symphonies* were produced three years later (1808), but excited little attention. The programme was fearfully long, and the performances were execrable. Beethoven's prospects, therefore, were not encouraging.

About this time an offer was made to him to become capellmeister to Jérôme, King of Westphalia, and Beethoven wrote in a letter, "It is not at all unlikely that I may accept it." Fortunately, however, the Archduke Rudolf, his patron and pupil, and the Princes Lobkowitz and Kinsky, two of his best friends, guaranteed him a yearly income of 4,000 florins. No more was heard of the Westphalian scheme—which would scarcely have suited the composer, and which, moreover, would have been of short duration—and a quiet life devoted to composition now seemed in store for him. In 1809 the French were again in Vienna, but Beethoven went on producing masterpieces such as the *Adieux Sonata* and the *E flat Piano-forte Concerto*. In 1810 there was a great depreciation in the value of paper-money, so

that Beethoven's pension was seriously reduced. A generous offer of the patrons to make good the loss turned out badly. Kinsky died in 1812, and Beethoven claimed the promised money, but, after several years' litigation, only received a reduced sum; and, again, Lobkowitz died in 1816. Thus the composer did not derive the comfort which the kindly-meant gift seemed to promise.

In 1812 he went, for the sake of his health, to Teplitz, and there he met Goethe, of whom, two years previously, he had heard so much from the celebrated Bettina Brentano, who visited him several times at Vienna. The story of the poet's obsequiousness, and of the composer's haughty behaviour in presence of princes and courtiers, has been often told. Instead of repeating it, the description of Beethoven in a letter addressed to Zelter by Goethe shall be given :

"His talent astonished me, but his personality is utterly untamed. He is certainly not wrong in finding the world detestable, but he does not thereby make it more enjoyable either for himself or for others. He is, however, greatly to be excused and greatly to be pitied, as he is losing his hearing, which is perhaps less harmful to the musical than to the sociable side of his nature. He who in himself is laconically disposed becomes doubly so through that failing."

Real intercourse between them was an impossibility. If Beethoven was dissatisfied with Goethe as a man, as a poet he admired him to the last; the writing, indeed, of music for

"Faust" was one of the great works which he had hoped to carry out before he "departed for the Elysian Fields."

It is curious to note the part that Napoleon played in Beethoven's art life. As Consul, he inspired the *Eroica Symphony*; as Emperor, his entry into Vienna in 1809 was fatal to *Fidelio*; and in 1813 the defeat of his army at Vittoria gave birth to the *Battle Symphony*, the cause of a long quarrel with Maelzel, the metronome maker, and of great and lasting disappointment to the composer, at receiving no acknowledgment of that symphony by the Prince Regent of England (afterwards George IV.), to whom he dedicated and forwarded the work.

December 8, 1813, was a red-letter day for Beethoven. He conducted a highly successful concert in the large hall of the University for the benefit of the soldiers wounded at Hanau. The programme included as novelties the *Symphony in A, No. 7*, and the *Battle Symphony*. The former work was repeated at several concerts, and at one in the following year *Symphony No. 8, in F* was also produced.

The year 1814 was a memorable one for Beethoven. Napoleon was a prisoner at Elba, and the Congress met at Vienna, but only to break up suddenly at the news that the Emperor had escaped and was in Paris. A grand concert was given under Beethoven's direction, at which sovereigns, ambassadors, and other notabilities were present. Both on that occasion and at receptions they took notice of the composer,

who, though he did not occupy a position commensurate with his merits, already enjoyed world-wide celebrity. He also received presents of money, which he invested. Everything, except the threatened total loss of hearing, once again seemed to promise a bright future.

But towards the close of 1815 his brother Caspar died, leaving to his care his son Carl, and from that time Beethoven's life was one of ever-increasing misfortune. For five years he was engaged in law-suits, so as to get his nephew out of the control of the mother, whom he considered an unfit person to have charge of the youth. Beethoven was hasty in temper, hasty in forming opinions, and, though true and honest at heart, at times spoke and acted in a manner which he afterwards regretted. From all, however, that is known concerning his brother's widow, Beethoven seems to have been fully justified in his strong dislike to her. The whole story is exceedingly painful, and it is sad to think that the nephew should so ill have requited all that was done for him. Beethoven loved and cared for him as if he were his own son ; but the lad fell into bad company, neglected his studies, and finally, through his foolish conduct, was compelled to leave Vienna.

From 1818 to 1822 Beethoven was engaged on two important works—the *Mass in D*, and the *Ninth Symphony*. In 1818 the Archduke Rudolf had been appointed Archbishop of Olmütz, and the master resolved to write a



Mass for the installation of his beneficent patron. Though the ceremony was fixed for March 20, 1820, the Mass was not completed till long after that date. The symphony was bought by the London Philharmonic Society. } A  
The sum paid was certainly small, but had Beethoven, as the Society desired, come himself to London, where he was known and appreciated, he would probably have reaped a golden harvest. But in addition to worries with his nephew and housekeeping matters, to increasing deafness and bad health, he was greatly preoccupied with a plan which he had formed for publishing his Mass by subscription. }  
Much time and trouble resulted in his receiving only about £175; for there were not more than seven subscribers: the Courts of Prussia, France, Saxony, Darmstadt, and Russia, Prince Radziwill, and Schelbe, founder of the Cecilian Society at Frankfort.

The indifference shown towards what Beethoven considered one of his greatest works depressed him. Further, experience of his past concerts did not encourage him to give another one. The symphony, although written for the Philharmonic Society, and paid for by them, was dedicated to the King of Prussia, and negotiations with Count Brühl, at Berlin, were opened for the production there of both Mass and symphony. When in 1809 Beethoven thought of entering the service of Jérôme his patrons came forward, and by promising a settled income induced him to remain in Vienna. } A

Once again there was a danger of losing him. The Court cared only for light music, the public was carried away by Rossini's seductive melodies and exciting crescendo effects, and nearly all the Vienna composers would have welcomed his departure. But friends and patrons again rallied round the master. A memorial was drawn up begging him once more to display his power, to produce his Mass and his symphony, and by writing another opera to show the world what German art could accomplish. Beethoven was touched, and consented.

After endless delays and difficulties, the memorable concert took place in the Kärnthnerthor theatre on May 7, 1824. The symphony and portions of the Mass were given; enthusiasm prevailed, and Fräulein Unger turned the composer round to face the audience, so that he might see, for he could not hear, the applause. The concert, however, was a financial failure, and so also was a second performance a fortnight later. This was the composer's farewell to the musical world; he was irritated and depressed, and the future looked gloomy enough. But fresh interest in his art came to him from an unexpected quarter.

In 1824 the Russian nobleman, Prince Galitzin, commissioned Beethoven to write some quartets, and the master eagerly set to work, and from that time to his death these works (five in number) so occupied his time and attention that all else, including the visit

to London, which in many respects would have been so beneficial to him, was practically set aside.

Dropsy was the immediate cause of Beethoven's death, which took place on March 26, 1827. *Plaudite amici, comædia finita est*, were almost the last words addressed to his friends who tended him at the last. His life had, indeed, been a grim comedy. It seemed as if, in sport, the Fates had granted transcendent gifts to a mortal, and then watched to see how far poverty, illness, the affliction of deafness, family troubles, and disappointments in his artistic career would interfere with their development. "Grief," wrote Franz Schubert in his diary, "sharpens the understanding and strengthens the soul;" and so was it with Beethoven. We pity the man, but history confirms Schubert's words: the composers whose lives were happiest, and in a worldly sense prosperous, were not among the greatest.

Beethoven's funeral was attended by a large concourse of people. He was buried in the old Währing cemetery, but in 1888 his mortal remains were transferred to the Central Cemetery at Vienna.

Beethoven was never married, though, according to his earliest biographer, "he was often in love." One of his sonatas was dedicated to his young pupil, the Countess Julia Guicciardi, and around the famous love-letters found among his papers after his death, and supposed to have

been addressed to her, and a brief record in one of the conversation-books used by the master, have been woven romantic tales. The evidence in favour of the impassioned letter being intended for Julia Guicciardi is indeed strong. The letters probably belong to the year 1801, the conversation to 1823, and the latter seems to have been the only reference to Julia ever made by the master. It was a deep sorrow which for all those years he hid away silently in his heart.

To the above brief narrative must be added mention of some of the kind friends in Vienna, who recognised in great if not full measure the master's genius, and who sought in many ways to lighten his troubles. Zmeskall von Domano-wecz, Court Secretary, was one of the earliest, and the many letters, or rather notes, which Beethoven sent him, and which he carefully treasured up, show how ready this friend was to oblige; he cut quills, made purchases, arranged about servants, lodgings, and other matters. They also show Beethoven's humour and sarcasm. But frank as he was at times, and even, one may say, rude, Zmeskall never appears to have taken offence. Then there was Baron Gleichenstein, who in business and social matters was most helpful; he, however, left Vienna twelve years before the composer's death. Count Brunswick, too, was one of the master's staunchest admirers and friends.

Many ladies of rank admired Beethoven's gifts, and patronized him, but there were two



Der auf beschriebener unter folgenden Daten von dem  
Herrn von Buchhoffen für einen für längeren Zeitraum,  
für die pharmaceutische Gesellschaft in London, eingereicht,  
50 Pfund Sterling wüßig und das anhängen ist.  
Chen, am 27ten April 1824



Richard van der Horst

M. P.



or three women who rendered him exceptional help. One of these was the Countess Erdödy, in whose home when in special trouble he found comfort and sympathy; and another was Nanette Streicher, wife of the well-known piano manufacturer, and from his letters to her we learn how she looked after his servants, his clothes and linen—did everything, in fact, to try and make one of the most unpractical of men comfortable.

Beethoven's two pupils, Ries and Moscheles, looked after his interests; the latter, indeed, had the privilege of soothing the composer during his last hours. Anton Schindler, the secretary, and afterwards biographer, of Beethoven, had to put up with many explosions of temper, but remained faithful to his master. Letters to Hofmeister, Tobias Haslinger, and Schott give evidence that Beethoven's relations with publishers were by no means purely commercial.

It is to be regretted that Beethoven never visited England. When he was a boy, Mr. Cressener, the English *chargé d'affaires*, assisted his parents, and the last money which the composer received when on his death-bed was from England—viz., the £100 generously sent by the Philharmonic Society. It was his constant desire to see London. Many plans were formed. In 1812 he wrote to Thompson of Edinburgh that he had an idea of coming. A proposed tour with Maelzel about 1813 came to nothing. In 1817 there was a correspondence with the Philharmonic Society, but terms could not be

agreed upon. In 1823 Beethoven wrote to his English friend, Charles Neate: "I mean to visit England in 1824. I should be delighted to write for the Philharmonic Society, to see the country and all its distinguished artists." In 1825 he seemed on the very point of coming. He even writes to Neate to ask the name of an inn where he can stop, but the plan fell through. A day or two before his death he spoke of the Philharmonic Society and of the English nation, adding, "May God bless them."

The following extracts from letters of Beethoven reveal something of the man and of the artist. In writing to his friend Wegeler at Bonn, he says: "This much I say: you will only see me again if I become truly great; not only as an artist, but as a man you shall find me better." To Matthisson the poet: "The greater the progress an artist makes, the less the satisfaction with his older works." And only three years before his death we find him still aiming higher. "Apollo and the Muses will not allow me to be handed over yet to the skeleton Death, for I am greatly in their debt; before I depart for the Elysian Fields I must leave behind what the spirit prompts and commands to be completed."

Of critics here is his opinion: "Let them speak; they certainly will not bestow immortality on anyone by their chatter, neither will they deprive anyone of it if Apollo has so ordained." In the following we find him acting the part of a private and somewhat satirical



critic. His pupil, the Archduke Rudolf, sent him an attempt that he had made at composition, and this was the answer: "The music has adapted itself so thoroughly to the poem that one can truthfully say they are a pair of tedious sisters."

Here he comes before us as a practical teacher; he asks Czerny, with whom his nephew, Carl, was taking pianoforte lessons, "not to pull him up for *small faults* when playing, but to point them out afterwards."

His admiration for his great predecessor is expressed in the following words addressed to the Abbé Stadler: "I have always counted myself among the greatest worshippers of Mozart, and so shall remain till life's last breath." But he was also conscious of his own great gifts. To Ries he wrote in 1822: "If I could but get to London, what would I not write for the Philharmonic Society; for, Heaven be praised! Beethoven *can* write, although he can do nothing else."

## ART-WORK OF BEETHOVEN

SOME composers confined themselves almost exclusively to one branch of their art : Gluck, Rossini, or Verdi to dramatic, Chopin to pianoforte music, and Franz to songs ; and in such cases it is not very difficult to name one or two of their works which seem to represent them at their best. Others, like Bach, Mozart, or Beethoven, distinguished themselves in many branches ; to single out one work, or even one particular branch, brings with it the danger of excluding something of high importance. Mozart's "Don Giovanni," for instance, is a masterpiece ; but what about the "Requiem," or the last three symphonies (in C, E flat, and G minor) ? Difficult as the task is with Beethoven, we feel we shall do well to place at the head of this brief sketch of his art-work the

### SYMPHONIES.

In this department Beethoven out-distanced all his predecessors, and, although many admirable symphonies have been written since his death, no composer has even equalled, much less surpassed, him. His nine symphonies

are certainly not equally great, but they are all interesting. Beethoven was wont to depreciate his early works: to him each one seemed but a step to something higher. When he forwarded his setting of Matthisson's "Adelaide" to the poet some time after he had composed it, he wrote: "I feel a certain hesitation in now sending the 'Adelaide' to you. You yourself know what a change a few years brings about in an artist who is pressing forward." This was in 1800. Three years later, in a letter to the painter Macco, he refers to an oratorio text offered to him by Professor Meissner. He is too busy, however, to undertake to set it to music. If the poem is not quite ready, the composer hopes that Meissner will not hurry. "Before or after Easter," he continues, "I shall come to Prague and play to him some of my recent compositions, which will make him better acquainted with my style of writing"—evidently meaning his style at that time. And towards the close of his life he felt "as if I had written scarcely more than a few notes."

Beethoven appeared at various concerts soon after his arrival in Vienna, but he gave the first one for his own benefit on April 2, 1802, and at it was produced his first symphony in C (Op. 21). A year later appeared the second, in D (Op. 36), which in one of the few notices is said to be less satisfactory than the first: in the first, ease and spontaneity; in the second, a striving after originality! At the present day the second is considered in advance of the

first, yet so mildly representative of the master as we now know him that, excepting when all the symphonies are given in chronological order, it is seldom performed.

In 1804 appeared the third, the *Eroica* (Op. 55): its abnormal length, departures from usual form, bold modulations, syncopated or measure disturbing discords, and in no small degree the premature entry of the horn, which at rehearsal Ries thought a mistake on the part of the performer—all these things troubled the public and also the critics; the strength and grandeur of the music were only recognised by a few choice spirits. This was the work which Beethoven intended to be called the “Napoleon Bonaparte” symphony; for he regarded the First Consul as the political and social regenerator of Europe. When, however, he heard that his ideal hero had assumed the title of Emperor, the title-page was torn up and trampled under foot.

The fourth symphony (Op. 60) was produced in 1807, the clear, sparkling music forming a marked contrast to the storm and stress of its predecessor.

The fifth and sixth symphonies, in F (*Pastoral*, Op. 67), and C minor (Op. 68), were both given for the first time on December 22, 1808, and the high merit of the latter work, notwithstanding drawbacks already mentioned, was duly recognised by a prominent critic. If one were forced—for the decision would not be easy—to name the most representative



work of Beethoven in the plenitude of his power, it would surely be this C minor. Programme music was no invention of Beethoven's, but the *Pastoral*, with its title, superscriptions, mood pictures, and realistic touches, may be regarded as the parent of Berlioz's "Symphonie Fantastique," and of many curious and interesting experiments by still more modern composers to extend the limits of their art.

The seventh and eighth symphonies in A (Op. 92) and F (Op. 93) did not appear until 1813 and 1814: the former full of energy and romantic glow; the latter of poetry mixed with humour. Then after an interval of ten years came the ninth and last. The *Pastoral* has given rise to much discussion, and still more so the ninth in D minor (Op. 125). In the latter Wagner saw a "new path" opened—the union henceforth of tone and word, as displayed in his music-dramas. This is not the place to discuss Wagner's opinion; all we have to do is to note the power, poetry, and striking tendency of the work. Voices are tried to the uttermost in the second (choral) part, but Beethoven's conception throughout is of the loftiest.

Before passing from the orchestral works, just a word may be said about the overtures. The greatest will be referred to in connection with the opera *Fidelio*. The two other most noteworthy are the *Coriolan* and the *Egmont*, both strong as music and both important illustrations of Beethoven's working to pictures

in his mind. The character of these works no doubt influenced Mendelssohn in some of his characteristic overtures.

Then there are the concertos—five for pianoforte with orchestra (C, Op. 15; B flat, Op. 19; C minor, Op. 37; G, Op. 58; and the E flat, surnamed the *Emperor*, Op. 73), and the one for violin in D. Of these, the last two for pianoforte and the one for violin are the greatest. And with regard to the last piano, and the violin concerto, it may be said that they still represent the highest achievements in that particular kind.

#### BEETHOVEN'S COMPOSITIONS.

This mention of important works is summary enough, but with such a quantity of valuable material something, under present conditions, has to suffer. In like manner we must refer briefly to the principal chamber-music works. The septet, Op. 20, soon gained popularity, and, though produced 103 years ago, still flourishes. The quintet in C, Op. 29, is another early work of rare charm and brilliancy. Of the six pianoforte trios, the one in B flat, Op. 97, is the special favourite, but the two in D and E flat, Op. 70, Nos. 1 and 2, are splendid specimens of Beethoven's restrained power and poetical feeling. Of the ten sonatas for pianoforte and violin, one, the *Kreutzer*, Op. 47, enjoys more favour than the rest, probably by reason of the grateful and brilliant writing for both performers. The later work in G,

Op. 96, strongly characteristic of the middle period of the composer's art-work towards its close, is, however, most interesting. Of the five sonatas for piano and 'cello, the one in A, Op. 69, is best known, but the later one in C, Op. 102, No. 1, is the nobler.

#### THE PIANOFORTE SONATAS.

The music of the symphonies deals for the most part with nature, and with man and his destinies; that of the sonatas has a more personal character. The one astonishes us by its breadth and grandeur; the other makes a more personal appeal. The symphonies may be likened to stirring public speeches; the sonatas rather to private conversation with a sympathetic friend.

The evolution of the master's genius can be advantageously and most conveniently studied in his pianoforte sonatas. An orchestra or four players are not always to hand for the symphonies or quartets, but there are few homes, however humble, without a pianoforte, on which all lovers of music play more or less well. From the books on a man's shelf you may, as a rule, gather much of his character and tastes, and so is it with a musician's library: if Bach's forty-eight preludes and fugues, and Beethoven's pianoforte sonatas—the "Old and the New Testament," as they have been happily named—are not in it, that man will be accounted of little worth among those who take interest in high art.

Of the thirty-two sonatas composed by Beethoven, the first three (Op. 2, No. 1, in F minor; No. 2 in A; and No. 3 in C) were published in 1796, and dedicated "à Mr. Joseph Haydn, Docteur en musique"—a dedication with a spice of satire in it, if the saying attributed to the composer by Ries be true—and it is just the sort of thing that the composer, in the first flush of manhood and conscious of his latent powers, might have said—viz., that he had taken lessons from Haydn, *but never learnt anything from him*. In these sonatas we find him in what is conveniently, if somewhat roughly, designated the Haydn-Mozart period. In its clear-cut phrases, formally-divided periods, and general style of writing, the music points to the past, and yet there are clear manifestations of individuality, notably in the slow movements of the second and third. By 1807 there had appeared no fewer than twenty-three sonatas (including those mentioned). The last and last but one are those in C major, Op. 53, and in F minor, Op. 57, known respectively as the *Waldstein* and the *Appassionata*, and in them Beethoven shows a mastery of form and technique, a nobility and power, which were not surpassed even in the deeply interesting sonatas of the later years. It is easy to mark the earliest numbers as belonging to the Haydn-Mozart period, and these two as representing the highest point of the second period, but no one work can be named as actually ending the first



or beginning the second—in some we note advance, in others retrogression. The fourth sonata, in E flat, Op. 7, for instance, is far more original than several between it and the *Appassionata*. Beethoven gradually threw off the influence of his predecessors, gradually grew greater; but, as with every genius, inspiration varied. After the fourth sonata, the C sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 2—to which the foolish name *Moonlight* has been given—and the D minor, Op. 31, No. 2, are the two most remarkable. In the others there is always something in the thoughts themselves, and especially in the manner in which they are expressed, to recall outward influences, and consequently the age to which the music belongs. In the two named above we have Beethoven the tone-poet—the “musical Shakespeare,” as he has been aptly styled—in his full strength. In the other sonatas there are many passages—nay, whole movements—of which the same could be said, yet there is not one in which the composer so completely transports us into a romantic world, making us feel when the end comes, as if, like Walter in “The Mastersingers,” we have “had a wondrous lovely dream.”

After the *Appassionata* there came two more intensely poetical works—the *Sonate caractéristique*, Op. 81A, in which the composer speaks from his heart to that of his hearer, and the one in E minor, Op. 90, in which, as mentioned elsewhere, he shows strong emotion.

The former appeared in 1811, the latter in 1814. After an interval of three years followed the sonata in A, Op. 101. We are now on the threshold of the last period; emotion is more intense, intellect more subtle, and as a natural consequence we find a broader and at times highly complicated style of writing: richer, stronger harmonic colouring, and form, both as regards contents and sequence of movements—altogether unconventional. In this period we feel the atmosphere more mystic, the moods deeper, the music at times reaching to sublime heights. Of these later sonatas there are five. The second, in B flat, Op. 106, is the longest of all the thirty-two, and by far the most difficult. Written during the litigation in connection with the nephew, it was commenced in 1817 and completed in 1819. During that time Beethoven wrote no orchestral work, no other sonata. In a letter to Ries the composer says: "The sonata was written under the most sorrowful circumstances." Taken as a whole it may not be his greatest, but it contains some of his most powerful writing. In 1821 appeared the sonatas, Op. 109 in E and Op. 110 in A flat, and in 1823 Op. 111 in C minor. Then, so far as works of the kind were concerned, the master laid down his mighty, magic wand.

Besides sonatas, Beethoven wrote many airs with variations—a form particularly congenial to him—for pianoforte. The variations of Haydn and Mozart are clever and attractive, yet for the

most part there is in them clockwork-like precision: one often feels as if an "etc." after a few bars of each variation would be sufficient to enable a musician who had any experience in writing to complete them. The best variations of Beethoven, on the other hand, are full of surprises in figuration, rhythm, harmony, and tonality. Here, however, we must simply name as the finest those in F, Op. 34; in E flat, Op. 35, on the theme from the *Prometheus* ballet, one which was afterwards used in the *finale* of the *Eroica Symphony*; and the wonderful variations on the *Diabelli Waltz*, Op. 120, the last-named being of special value in studying the master's third and latest period. It may be noted that the composer only put an opus number to those of his sets of variations which he considered as of a certain importance.

#### QUARTETS.

In the quartets we could again trace the composer's art progress, but a few words must now suffice. The six bearing the opus number 18 correspond fairly to the three sonatas (Op. 2); the three "Rasoumoffsky"—thus named from the person to whom they were dedicated—(Op. 59), as regards style and strength, to the C minor symphony; while those which followed represent the latest period. These are the quartets in E flat (Op. 127), B flat (Op. 130), C sharp minor (Op. 131), A minor (Op. 132), and F (Op. 135), works which have given rise to much discussion.

Rossini found in them "des moments sublimes, mais des mauvais quarts-d'heure," and at one time that view was shared by many. Familiarity with the music, however, makes clear what at first seemed dark, and reveals unexpected beauties, so that we rather feel inclined to reverse Rossini's saying, and declare that in them there are sublime quarters of an hour, but uncomfortable moments. For a study of Beethoven's last manner these compositions, to which he devoted the last years of his life, offer golden opportunities, of which as yet full advantage has not been taken.

"FIDELIO."

We now turn to the vocal works, beginning with *Fidelio*. Beethoven ends one of his letters to the celebrated artist Alexander Macco, who took his portrait more than once: "Go on painting, and I will go on composing; thus shall we live in the memory of men. For ever?—yes, perhaps for ever!" He informs his friend that he has just commenced working at his opera, and the sentence just quoted seems to show that he felt the importance of the work he was about to undertake. The success of Cherubini's "*Les deux Journées*" (*Die Wasserträger*) put him on his mettle. *Fidelio*—or *Leonore*, as the composer so desired his opera to be named—though a great work, is not, like the symphony in C minor or the one in A major, perfect in all its parts; the second act is indeed on a far higher plane than the first. Beethoven loved to take his own time, and yet





L. van Beethoven

Lyser's sketch

*Van Beethoven's Original Handwriting*

SKETCHES OF BEETHOVEN BY LYSER.



the day was no doubt named by which the work was to be ready. The subject appealed strongly to him, but the libretto did not satisfy him. The opera, produced in 1805, was remodelled and given again in 1806, further changes being made when it was revived in 1814. "Your improvements in the opera," so he wrote to Treitsche, the Court poet, "encourage me to restore the desolate ruins of an old castle."

But if the opera, notwithstanding the dramatic power and the pathos displayed in the dungeon scene, was not an ideal work, the master wrote his real opera in the magnificent *Leonore* overture No. 3, a revision of the overture originally composed for the production of the opera. Wagner remarks how "cramped and hindered" the master must have felt "with the music-pieces of his opera" preventing the full unfolding of his power, and he goes on to say: "Wherefore, as if to launch forth all his fill of force for once, he threw himself with wellnigh desperate weight upon the overture, and made of it a music-piece of theretofore unheard significance and breadth."\* This *Leonore* is, in fact, not only the greatest of Beethoven's overtures, but the greatest ever written.

The opera was not a success, though, as we mentioned in the story of his life, the composer did not help to secure it. Dr. Henry Reeve, in his "Journal of a Residence at Vienna and Berlin, 1805-6," was present on the first night,

\* Richard Wagner's "Prose Works," translated by W. A. E. Ellis, vol. iii., p. 300.

and his account of the work, which we do not remember to have seen quoted, may be read with interest. It runs thus :

"*Thursday, November 21.*—Went to the Wieden Theatre to the new opera *Fidelio* the music composed by Beethoven. The story and plan of the piece are a miserable mixture of low manners and romantic situations; the airs, duets, and choruses equal to any praise. The several overtures—for there is an overture to each act—appeared to be too artificially composed to be generally pleasing, especially on being first heard. Intricacy is the character of Beethoven's music, and it requires a well-practised ear, or a frequent repetition of the same piece, to understand and distinguish its beauties. This is the first opera he ever composed, and it was much applauded; a copy of complimentary verses was showered down from the upper gallery at the end of the piece. Beethoven presided at the piano-forte, and directed the performance himself. He is a small, dark, young-looking man, wears spectacles, and is like Mr. Koenig. Few people present, though the house would have been crowded in every part but for the present state of public affairs."

This is interesting in that it is the opinion of an amateur who listened attentively, thought over what he had heard, and recorded his opinion, probably the same evening, in his diary.

Wagner, after the sentence quoted above, remarks that, though Beethoven only made this one experiment in opera, he still hoped to find a poem enabling him to show his full power. Many libretti were offered to him, of which only one or two were chosen, yet only after a time to be discarded. Already, in 1808, Beethoven discussed with Collin "*Macbeth*" as subject

for an opera, and the poet wrote and published the first act of the libretto, and the composer actually made a sketch for the "Witches' Chorus." "But the opera was abandoned," says Matthieu von Collin in an article on his brother's works, because, forsooth, "it threatened to become too sombre!" For a time, too, he thought of setting "Melusine" libretto by Grillparzer. In 1822 Von Griesinger wrote to him to say that Härtel wished to know "whether he could not find an opera text to his liking, and work at it, before finally hanging up his harp." The harp was not hung up, but no work was written for the stage; the master, as we have seen, had his attention turned in a different direction.

#### MASSES AND ORATORIO.

Of his two Masses in C, Op. 86, and in D (*Missa solemnis*), Op. 123, the second is by far the most noteworthy. Beethoven spent years over it, and considered it his "most successful" work. The music is highly elaborate, and in the heat of composition Beethoven seemed to forget the compass of ordinary voices. Into this work Beethoven threw his whole soul: forms seem too narrow, the technique of his art not sufficiently developed, and the compass of the human voice too limited, for what he wanted to express. His disregard of voice compass was, of course, a practical drawback to a successful performance of the work. Beethoven's deafness did not, of course, prevent him



from knowing that beyond a certain limit there would be undue strain, but while composing he thought not of such things. The grandeur of the music is beyond question, but it represents a struggle between the real and the ideal.

Beethoven wrote one oratorio, *Christ on the Mount of Olives*, and one opera, *Fidelio*. The latter is a remarkable work, yet in neither branch did he achieve unequivocal success. The oratorio, produced in 1803, had a considerable run, but at a later period the composer acknowledged that he had not treated his subject in the right spirit. At the present day it is seldom heard, and in a list of the master's great works would not be deemed worthy of a place. Text-books were sent to Beethoven, one of them by Bernard, entitled "The Victory of the Cross," for a time seriously engaging his attention. In 1815 the Gesellschaft für Musikfreund "commissioned him to write an oratorio, and nine years later Beethoven, in a letter to Hanscka, one of the officials, says that he will most certainly set the Bernard text to music as soon as possible," yet not a single note appears to have been written. The titles of two poems submitted to the composer are interesting: "The Deluge" and "The Descent of the Saviour into Hades." There was another oratorio which he was contemplating, and of this we hear something from Dr. Wawruch, who attended the master at the last: "He was cheerful and often witty; he dreamed that he had finished his oratorio *Saul and David*."

## CHARACTERISTICS OF HIS ART-WORK

HAYDN and Mozart must often, like Beethoven, have worked to pictures in their mind. Haydn, indeed, acknowledged that he invented little romances in order to stir his imagination ; and Mozart, though his art-work was often of a purely musical kind, must surely have had some poetical programme for his later sonatas and symphonies. In his C minor pianoforte sonata or his G minor symphony we are not content with admiring the music *per se*, but feel inclined to ask what it means. In all Beethoven's great works that question ever haunts us. It is pressed upon us, not only by the character of the music, but by titles which the master gave to some of his works, and superscriptions to certain movements ; also by certain remarks made by him and handed down on good authority. This poetic basis, as it is called, no doubt accounts for the special unity which prevails in his works, not only between the different sections of a movement, but between the movements themselves. With Beethoven one part instinctively grew out of another, just as in Nature the flower springs from a bud, the latter from a seed. And now for a few simple illustrations.

In the three sonatas marked Op. 31 Beethoven stated that he was making a new departure—in other words, he was becoming more himself—and although early compositions, they offer characteristic specimens of his art-work. In No. 1 in G major the germ of the principal theme is



and throughout the movement both germ and theme play important parts, while the continuation of the above :



serves for transition to the second theme, for development, section, and coda ; moreover, it is hinted at in the second theme. Remarkable use, too, is made of the germ just before the recapitulation section.\*

Let us examine for a moment another movement from a very familiar sonata, the one in F minor, Op. 57, known as the *Appassionata*.

\* For readers unacquainted with musical forms it may be explained that a movement in what is termed sonata-form, consists of three sections: exposition, development, and recapitulation.

The following small figure :



practically constitutes the germ of the whole of the first movement. A detailed analysis cannot be attempted here, but the music deserves close study. The germ—presented, however, first in downward form—shapes itself into a stately mystic theme, and afterwards a second theme is evolved from it of quite different character; moreover, it serves as material, not only for development, but for the formation of various subordinate parts. The whole *allegro* is alive with it, and even in the other movements its presence is still felt. Then there is that mysterious figure :



Though at first thrice repeated, the notes are played softly and attract little notice. Later on, however, just before the recapitulation, they sound out with terrible fierceness, and still again are they heard just before the coda, while in the opening bar of the latter the question, as it were, is transformed into a defiant answer.

It is this organic structure which gives such strength to Beethoven's music; and the stronger the latter, the more intimate, of course, is the connection of the various parts. He does not simply repeat a figure or phrase in a different key, or with different harmonic colouring—for of that one would soon grow weary—but he presents it in manifold shapes, and often in so subtle a manner that, for a time, it escapes recognition; it produces its effect without, as it were, being seen.

Beethoven was not satisfied with unity between the various sections of a movement; he tried in his symphonies, quartets, and sonatas to make the different movements acts, as it were, of the same drama. Earlier composers were more or less conventional; they started with a lively *allegro*, then came a graceful *andante* or *adagio*, and by way of finale a light *rondo*. Contrast appears to have been their chief aim. No one knew better the value of contrast than Beethoven, but he had something higher in view. His sonata in D minor, Op. 31, No. 2, and the one in C sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 2, well illustrate this. In the former there is similarity of mood between the first and third movements; and, more than that, certain outward likenesses which strengthen the connection, but which, standing alone, would be of little or no account. The composer himself gave clues to the meaning of some of these short music dramas, as they may be called. On being asked for the key to the





SCHWARZSPANIERHAUS, WITH A FLAG OVER A WINDOW OF THE ROOM  
IN WHICH BEETHOVEN DIED.



former work, and also to the *Appassionata*, he replied: "Read Shakespeare's 'Tempest.'" He did not mean that the play could be followed in the sonata after the manner of some realistic programme music, but no doubt that the personages and atmosphere of the play suggested to him moods and colouring. He had the drama in mind, and that gave consistency to his work. As to the sonata in C sharp minor, *quasi una fantasia*, the dedication to Countess Guicciardi naturally leads one to believe that the first movement reflects a melancholy, the impassioned finale a restless state of mind caused by the composer's hopeless passion for that lady. This is quite possible, but whatever the source of inspiration, the movements are part and parcel of some sad soul drama; the slow triplet quavers of the first become rapid agitated semiquavers in the finale, while throughout the middle *allegretto*, though in a major key, there still runs a vein of sadness and of longing. In the last sonata but one—viz., the A flat, Op. 110—the opening notes of the first movement serve, with changed rhythm, for the subject of the final fugue. There are a few traces in other sonatas of the same sort, and they are undoubtedly curious and interesting, but they have, unfortunately, been the innocent instruments of much that results in mere outward unity. Bach made a few experiments of a similar kind. This method of connecting movements was indeed already a feature of the Suite long before Bach.

Instrumental music is roughly divided into two kinds: that which exists, as it were, for its own sake, and that which rests on a poetic basis. In the first we are attracted by the charm and character of the melodies, by skill in their development, and by clearness of form, as, for instance, in Beethoven's *Symphony in C*, No. 1, with its bold *allegro*, graceful *andante*, sparkling *scherzo*, and lively *finale*. We enjoy it, and with that rest contented. The poetic basis genus may be subdivided into two species: in the one the particular programme is revealed by the composer, in the other it is not. In the *Pastoral Symphony*, No. 6, the title of the work and superscriptions to the various movements offer such a programme. No. 5 is simply marked in C minor, yet we cannot help feeling—and quite apart from the “Thus Fate knocks at the door” explanation of the opening four notes, which Schindler attributes to Beethoven—that some great drama is being enacted in tones. The composer, indeed, informed his English friend, Charles Neate, that he “always worked to a picture in his mind”; and such was, at any rate, very frequently the case. Schindler, his biographer, indeed, tells us that at one time Beethoven seriously thought of issuing an edition of his works, the poetic basis in each case being indicated.

Composers before Beethoven had, as we have mentioned, worked to mental pictures; but those of Beethoven, drawn from Shakespeare, Goethe, or from grand scenes of nature,

left a deeper impress on his music. From the days of our composer down to the present, attempts have been made by means of descriptive programmes to elucidate his music, so overwhelming is the feeling that it all has a meaning. Beethoven, like his great predecessors, Handel and Bach, indulged occasionally in imitating the sounds of nature—the singing of birds, the falling of raindrops, or the crashing of thunder, as in the *Pastoral*—but his pictures belonged, as a rule, to the spiritual, not to the material world. We have dwelt somewhat on this matter because it differentiates the master's music from so much that was written by his predecessors; it is that which makes it so real, so emotional, so powerful in the effect which it produces. The “*Tempest*” sonatas have been mentioned. Here are one or two more programmes. His friend, Amenda, is said to have received from him a copy of the *Quartet in F*, Op. 18, No. 1, in which the *adagio affetuoso ed appassionato* was described as a tone-picture of the tomb-scene in “*Romeo and Juliet*”—i.e., of the feelings aroused by it. Count Lichnowsky, to whom Beethoven dedicated the *Sonata in E minor*, Op. 90, wanted to know the meaning of the music. The composer replied: “If you want superscriptions, write over the first, ‘Struggle between head and heart’” (in allusion to the long hesitation of the Count to marry a lady of high merit, but below him in social position), “and over the second, ‘Conversation with the beloved one.’” And, once again, the



superscription to the *adagio* of the *Quartet in A minor*, "Holy song of thanksgiving offered to the Divinity from one recovered from sickness," was programme-music of the noblest kind—a reverent outpouring, in eloquent tones, of the composer's feelings. All through Beethoven's art-work there are signs of lesser or greater importance to show that, for him, music was more than a science, more than an art: it was soul language.

The pictures, then, to which the master worked were heroic, tragic, sublime, and often concerned with deep problems of life; but these appealed to Beethoven, because he himself was noble by nature, tender-hearted, and possessed of a truly religious spirit. He did not surround himself by a certain atmosphere, or throw himself into some sad or at times joyous mood, artificially, as Haydn and others seem to have done. They took possession of him: some were evoked by the genius of a great poet and seemed real, others were actually reflections of what was passing in and around him; but everything affected him intensely.

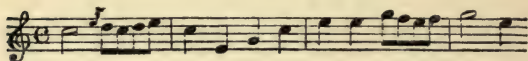
In daily life he was prone to exaggeration; when excited he became furious with rage and could not listen to reason. The fit over, he would become unduly apologetic. He loved all his friends, but one or other at times found the course of true friendship anything but smooth. His ancestors were Flemish, and he inherited their solidity of character, which, however,

often assumed the form of obstinacy. A sense of humour was so strong in him that all his sorrows and misfortunes could not kill it, but when offended it assumed a form by no means pleasant. Intense, too, was his inner life: his thoughts, his emotions, and his mental pictures.

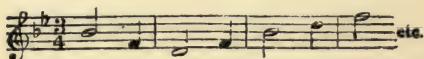
Other characteristics of Beethoven's music may be mentioned. He created his melodies out of the same material as his predecessors—viz., out of the seven notes of the major or minor scale—and harmony and counterpoint he had learnt nearly from the same books as Haydn and Mozart. And yet, if we consider the works which he produced in the plenitude of his powers, they have a peculiar *cachet* of their own. "Thoroughly Beethovenish" is an expression often used in speaking of one or other of his masterpieces. From the few notes of the scale the great composers evolved themes which are so different from one another that it can be at once said: This is Mozart or Haydn, or that Beethoven. The mystery of genius is unfathomable. But there are special characteristics in each of the masters which offer outward manifestation of their individuality. The greatness of their music we only feel; certain features of it can, however, be described.

Many notable melodies of Beethoven consist of scale passages or of notes of the common chord; it is their rhythmic grouping which gives them life and character.

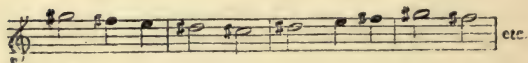
He was not the first to do this. Haydn wrote:



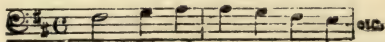
and Mozart :



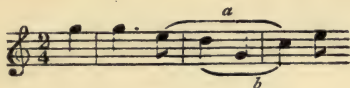
But Beethoven's themes thus formed are particularly striking. Those of the first movements of the *Appassionata Sonata* and the *Choral Symphony* offer fine examples of chord melodies; as illustration of scale-note formation may be named the second theme in the opening movement of the *Waldstein* :



and especially the noble theme on which the choral part of the *Ninth Symphony* is based :

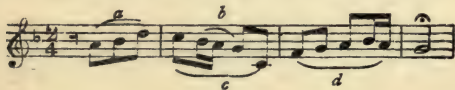


Of melodies appearing under different aspects we have an apt illustration in the *rondo* of the *Waldstein Sonata*. The theme commences thus :



It is played softly, with ordinary arpeggio, tonic, and dominant accompaniment. Later on it is heard *ff*, with massive chords, now major, now minor. A complete transformation has taken place. And after its third repetition it is extended, first by using portion *a*, then only *b*, and with constant decrescendo.

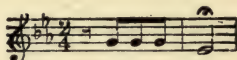
Reference must be made to one other work—viz., to the *Pastoral Symphony*, first movement. Here is the familiar opening phrase :



The sections marked *a*, *b*, *c*, and *d*, during the course of the movement all assume importance of their own. This extraordinary piecemeal treatment of a theme, and, as we shall presently see, bit-by-bit construction of themes, would seem to imply that Beethoven was a music-maker rather than an inspired tone-poet. Fortunately, the beauty, grandeur, and unity of

his works sufficiently prove that to hold such opinion would be utterly erroneous.

There is one extraordinary instance of the building up of a theme and a movement from a small group of chord notes :



It would be most natural for anyone to think that the powerful theme of the *C minor Symphony* came to the master as a sudden inspiration, and that the introductory notes quoted above were merely added after the movement was written. But a very early sketch shows that Beethoven was literally shaping a theme out of those four notes, or perhaps it would be better to say, from them a theme was gradually taking shape in his mind.

The use the master made of his thematic material was varied. In the *Pastoral* he dissects his theme into short figures or phrases, treating them as fresh material, from which he evolved phrases and whole sections. Here in the *C minor* the process is different; but without copious illustration it is quite impossible adequately to describe the wonders he achieved. Beethoven had no stereotyped method.

Simple yet striking examples of portions of a theme living, as it were, a life of their own will be found in the opening *allegro* of the *Wald-*

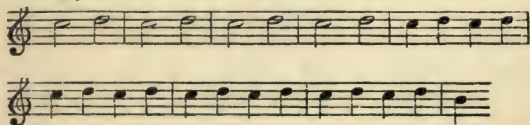


*stein.* In the first theme (bars 3 and 4) we have :



and if the movement be carefully examined, it will be found that the portions (mere figures) marked *a*, *b* and *c*, and the two bars themselves, marked *d*, are expanded into important passages and phrases.

A practice of which Beethoven was fond, and of which many instances occur in his works, was, to quote the succinct description given by that Beethoven enthusiast, the late Sir George Grove, "hurrying a phrase up to a climax by shortening the value of the notes," and of the two which he mentions in his analysis of the *Leonore* overture, No. 3, here is the second :



Others are more complex, more interesting, but the above, of forcible effect in the overture, is one which appeals directly to the eye ; a non-musical person has only to be told that the

black notes, being half the value of the white, move twice as quickly, and he will at once grasp the idea.

All great composers seemed to love startling harmonic effects, notes sounding as if they were wrong, or were being played in the wrong place. There are many bold things of the kind in Bach's "Well-tempered Clavier." Mozart's famous discords in the introduction to his quartet in C, caused Sarti, the Italian composer, not only to shudder, but to attack the German composer with his pen.

Beethoven has some passages after the style of those of Bach and Mozart, but he had a curious little habit of his own—viz., of mixing tonic and dominant harmonies, thus producing momentary confusion. The horn passage in the *Eroica*, mentioned in connection with that symphony, is a notable instance. The same kind of thing occurs at the end of the first movement of *Les Adieux* sonata. The first may have dramatic meaning, or may possibly be merely a stroke of humour; the second, however, seems a realistic attempt to depict the mingling of the farewells of the two friends, Beethoven and the Archduke Rudolf, the *dramatis personæ*, as we know, of the piece. Both passages were actually smoothed down by editors.

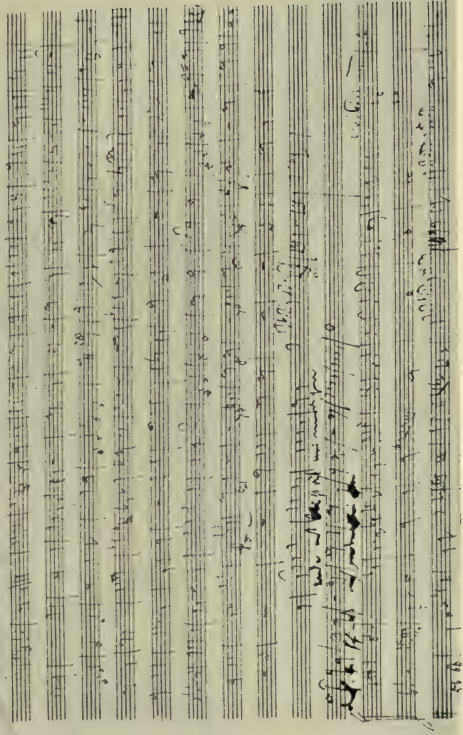
In studying chronologically the works of our master one cannot fail to notice a gradual change of style: melodies begin to overlap, and harmonies and harmonic progressions become

more complex, while in the later works fugal writing is a prominent feature. In his early youth Beethoven learnt to play Bach fugues, and afterwards not only studied the laws of fugue under Albrechtsberger, but wrote fugues by way of exercise. This early Bach influence and early study of a severe form is indirectly felt throughout the composer's art-work. Towards the end, however, he made direct, though certainly not mechanical, use of it. The long fugue in the B flat sonata, Op. 106, displays herculean power, yet, with its imitations, inversions, augmentations, and diminutions, it may recall the pigtail and powder period. In the fugue of the sonata in A flat, Op. 110, there are also scholastic devices; but here spirit triumphs completely over letter: Beethoven breathed new life into an old form, which Bach, by his wonderful genius, seemed to have exhausted.

## THE SKETCH-BOOKS

AN account of Beethoven, however brief, would be incomplete without some reference to the books in which he noted down and developed his musical ideas. Slight sketches by other composers have been preserved, but those of our master are unique. From early childhood down to the end of his life he thought, as it were, on paper, and this for his smallest as well as his greatest works. Many of these books have been preserved, also loose leaves, and from them many curious and valuable facts have been gleaned respecting the genesis and completion of his works. At times it is possible to follow the line of thought, to see at what he was aiming; at other times there are microscopic notes without clef or signature, melodies or figures suddenly broken off with "etc.," or mysterious signs pointing to some remote or possibly missing page, and words and sentences often difficult, and sometimes impossible, to decipher. Thus, even after long and patient examination a sketch will not always reveal its secret.

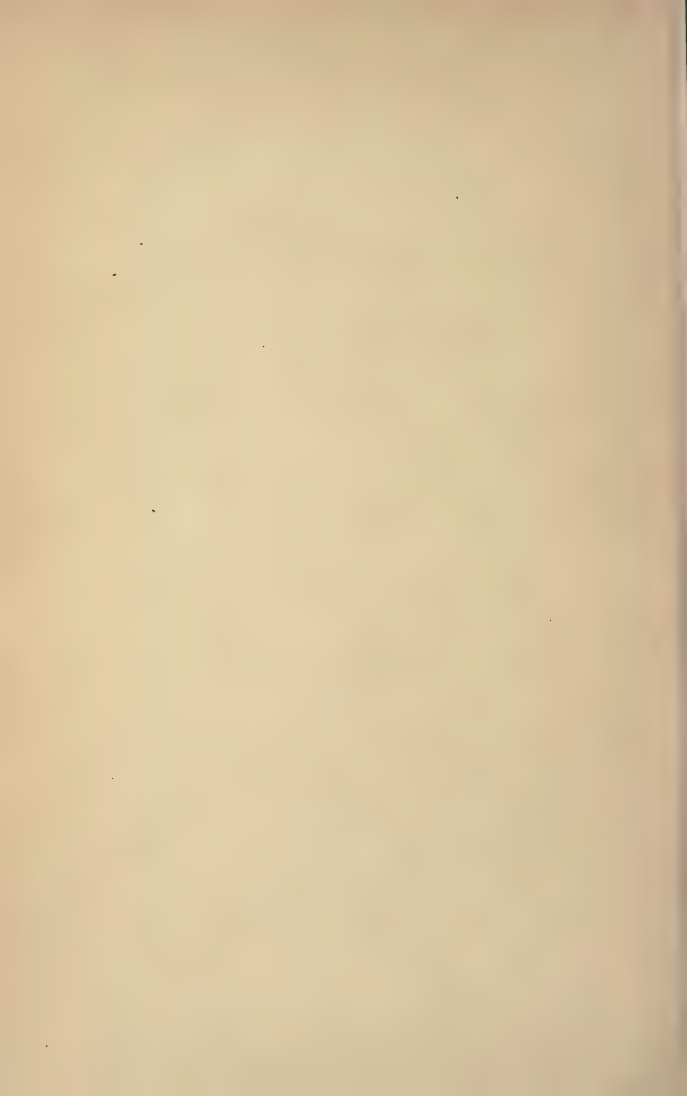
Most extraordinary are the first or very early sketches of many familiar melodies, for



SKETCH OF "ADELAIDE."

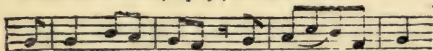
[In the British Museum.]



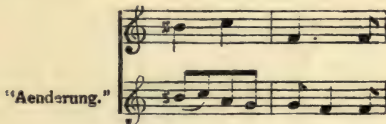


they lack that which now gives to them special character and charm. Here are short illustrations from a sonata and from a symphony :

Sonata in E minor, Op. 90, 2nd movement.



Compare this with the printed version, and see how the plain opening quaver, the up-beat, has been exchanged for two semiquavers rising gently upwards from the keynote to the third (*i.e.*, to the crotchet *g*); also how the quaver rest in the second bar has been replaced by a note giving greater flow and charm to the melody. A few bars further on in the same phrase we find :



The "Aenderung," or change, was finally adopted. Beethoven had a picture of the melody in his mind, but at first sees it, as it were, only dimly. The mental process seems photographed on paper.

The sketches offer, indeed, no clue as to the art of inventing grand melodies, but they are most interesting, and they at any rate show what pains Beethoven took with his work.

Here is the symphony illustration :

Finale of Symphony in C minor.



A bold beginning, as in the published version, but, as yet, an indifferent continuation.

The sketch-books confirm what Beethoven wrote to his friend Wegeler in 1801, practically at the outset of his career. He says : "As I now compose, I am often occupied with three or four works at the same time ;" and in this matter he told the simple truth. The sketch-book which he was using at the very time he wrote those words confirms his statement. The book, described by Nottebohm, who made such a deep study of the Beethoven sketch-books, shows that he was working simultaneously at the first and second movements of the sonata for violin and pianoforte in A, Op. 30, No. 1 ; also that while working at the *finale* of the *Kreutzer Sonata* he was sketching both the first and the second movements of the sonata for pianoforte and violin in C minor, Op. 30, No. 2. This was not the result of momentary pressure, but a habit which he formed, as the books show, while in Bonn, and one to which he adhered down to the very end of his life.

A book of the year 1804 contains important



the many extracts from the works of his predecessors which are scattered through these books: from Bach, Handel, Mozart, and others. He was not afraid of studying their works—he had no fear that by so doing he would weaken his individuality. There are several extracts from Handel, the composer for whom he entertained so great a veneration.

A study of these sketch-books is not a mere intellectual amusement: it impresses the various works on one's mind, and helps towards analyzing their contents. It shows, too, that the master strove to approach as near as he possibly could to perfection. Once, even after he had finished and sent off his *C minor Symphony* to the publishers, Breitkopf and Härtel, he wrote to the firm as follows:

"You will receive to-morrow a notice of some small improvements which I made during the performance of the symphony. When I sent you the manuscript, I had not heard a note of the music, and one must not pretend to be godlike, unable here and there to improve one's creations."

Again, Beethoven sent his sonata, Op. 106, to London to his friend Ries for publication. He afterwards wrote to point out that two notes were to be added at the commencement of the *adagio*, which, as first sent, commenced:





“Labour,” Sir Joshua Reynolds, quoting from the ancients, was accustomed to say, “is the price which the gods have set upon everything truly valuable.”

## PRINCIPAL WORKS OF BEETHOVEN

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"In questa tomba."

## BEETHOVEN LITERATURE

**A**N important Life of Wagner was commenced during the lifetime of the Bayreuth master, but it was not until eleven years after the death of Beethoven that a small though highly interesting booklet appeared, entitled, "Biographische Notizen über Ludwig van Beethoven." These Biographical Notices, written by Franz Wegeler and Franz Ries, friends of the composer, who knew him from his earliest days, have been largely drawn upon by subsequent writers. They were published at Coblenz in 1838.

The first real biographer was Anton Schindler, friend of Beethoven during his later years. His "Biographie Ludwig van Beethovens" appeared at Münster in 1840. A second enlarged edition was issued in 1845, and a third in 1860. This important work, with additions and modifications, was translated into English by Ignaz Moscheles, another friend, also pupil, of the master's. It was published in 1841.

In 1858 appeared a voluminous work in two volumes, from the pen of Adolf Bernhard Marx, entitled, "Beethoven's Leben und Schaffen," a fifth edition being issued in 1901.

In 1864 F. Nohl commenced his "Beethoven

Biographie," the third and last volume of which appeared in 1877. Though diffuse, it contains much that is interesting, and many valuable notes.

In 1866 another biographer commenced his labours—A. W. Thayer. The first volume of his great work, "Ludwig van Beethoven's Leben," was published at Berlin in 1866, the second in 1872, and the third in 1879. This last volume carries the life only down to the year 1816. Though written in English, it was published in a German translation by Dr. H. Deiters. Thayer died in 1897, and his translator has undertaken to revise the work, and to complete it. The first volume of this revised edition bears the date 1901.

In 1887 D. Theodor Frimmel published his "Neue Beethoveniana," which reached a second edition in 1890; and in 1901 his "Ludwig van Beethoven" in the "Berühmte Musiker" biographical series, edited by Heinrich Reimann.

A "Ludwig van Beethoven," in two volumes, by the well-known writer, W. J. v. Wasielewski, published in 1888, also claims notice.

In 1865 Ludwig Nohl edited a collection of letters, entitled, "Briefe Beethovens," and in 1867 a second collection, "Neue Briefe Beethovens." The first collection was translated into English by Lady Wallace (Longmans, 1866, 2 vols.).

Quite recently Dr. A. C. Kalischer collected, under the title "Neue Beethovenbriefe," more



letters, some hitherto unpublished, others which had appeared from time to time in various newspapers.

Two interesting works by Gustav Nottebohm are "Beethoveniana" and "Zweite Beethoveniana," giving descriptions of Beethoven's sketch-books, with copious illustrations. The second work appeared originally as articles ("Neue Beethoveniana") in a paper, and they were collected and edited after Nottebohm's death by E. Mandyczewski. Nottebohm also published "Ein Skizzenbuch von Beethoven" (1865); "Ein Skizzenbuch von Beethoven aus dem Jahr, 1803" (1880).

Of works in English concerning Beethoven there are few. "Beethoven depicted by His Contemporaries" is a translation by Emily Hall of an interesting work of Ludwig Nohl's, entitled "Beethoven." Wagner's essay "Beethoven" was translated by E. Dannreuther in 1880. "Beethoven" in the "Master Musicians" by F. J. Crowest, editor of the series, appeared in 1899.

Also must be mentioned the admirable article "Beethoven," by the late Sir George Grove, in his "Dictionary of Music and Musicians," also his "Beethoven and His Nine Symphonies" (1896), which reached a third edition in 1898.

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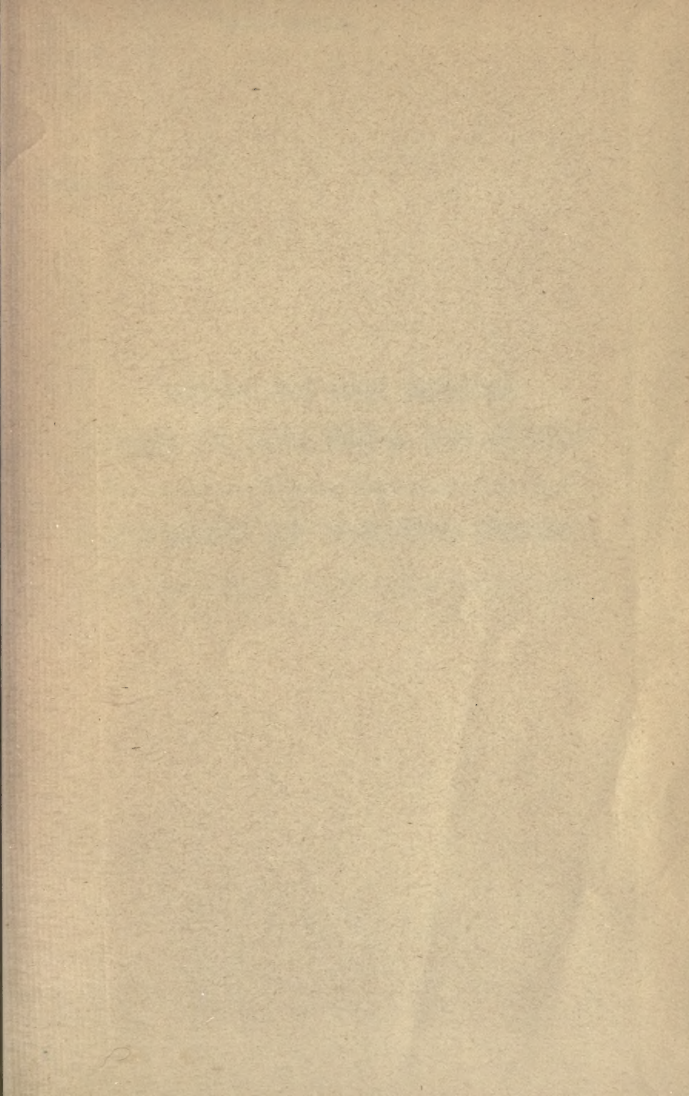
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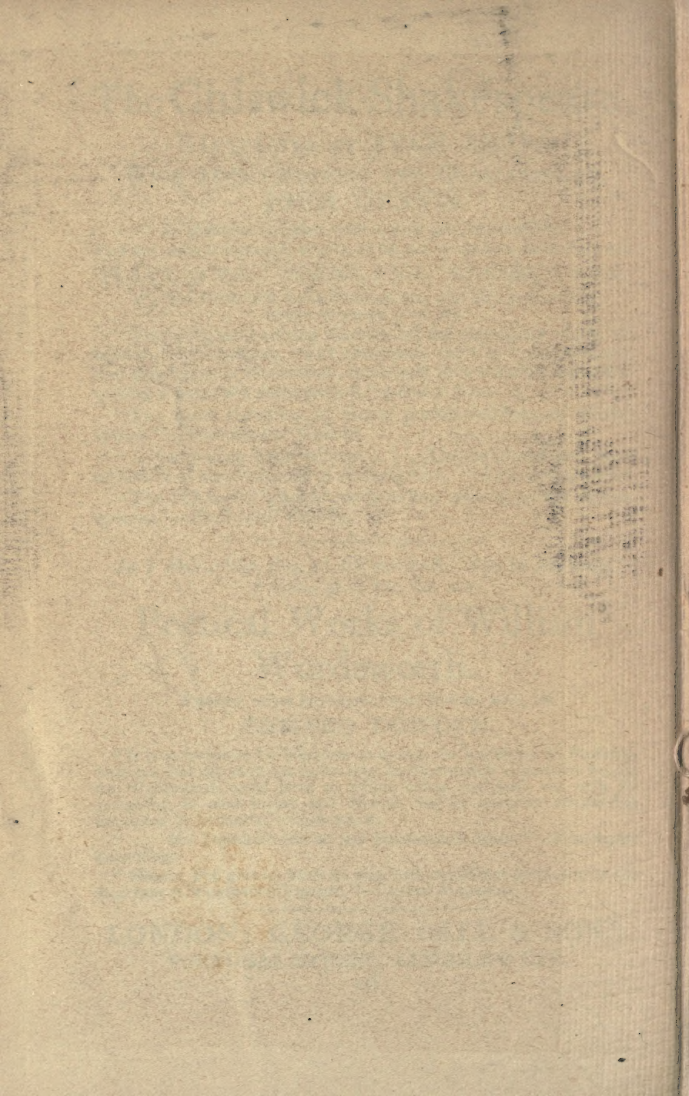
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